

From: West Virginia Chamber of Commerce <forjobs@wvchamber.com>
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To: Zack Maynard
Subject: West Virginia Chamber News Update 3-29-19

 WEST VIRGINIA CHAMBER
NEWS UPDATE
Friday, March 29, 2019

Top Stories

Record Crowd Expected - Just Over a Week Away!



WEST VIRGINIA CHAMBER 

2019 **HR** Conference
CHARLESTON MARRIOTT-TOWN CENTER

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
April 9, 2019



FEATURED SPEAKER
STEVE L. ROBBINS, PH.D.

Born in Vietnam, Dr. Robbins immigrated with his mother to the United States where they faced many challenges during a time when there was much anti-war and anti-Vietnamese sentiment. Dr. Robbins uniquely knows how to simultaneously challenge and motivate people with a dynamic use of storytelling, humor and extensive knowledge of pertinent issues and concepts.

Dr. Robbins' unique, science-based approach to inclusion and diversity uses neuroscience and the science of human behavior to encourage individuals and organizations to be more open-minded, mindful and intentional about inclusion and valuing people for their unique gifts, abilities and experiences.

Dr. Robbins earned an undergraduate degree in Communication from Calvin College, and his masters and doctorate in Communication Science from Michigan State University. The core of his work is about understanding human behavior and leveraging human differences in an ever-changing, fast-paced 21st century world.

wvchamber.com

The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce will host its *inaugural symposium on Diversity and Inclusion* at the [2019 Human Resources Conference!](#) This event is **only 11 days away**, so [click here](#) to register now! **You do not want to miss this event!**

The [agenda](#) is packed with exciting and engaging topics. Among several key speakers, attendees will hear from **nationally-renowned featured speaker, Dr. Steve L. Robbins**, a Vietnamese immigrant who uses a science-based approach to discuss *unintentional tolerance*.

The conference will begin on **Tuesday April 9** with the symposium on Diversity and Inclusion,

and continue on **Wednesday, April 10**. Meetings during both days will be held at the **Charleston Marriott Town Center**.

A **record-crowd** is expected for this ever-popular event, and the **room block is already sold out**. Applications for the Chamber's [**Five-Diamond Employer Awards**](#) are streaming in and the winners will be recognized during this conference.

This is also your chance to earn important professional development credits! This conference has been approved for **12.0 CLE Credits for West Virginia, including 3.6 credits for the Elimination of Bias and 7.2 credits for Office Management!** *SHRM and HRCI Credits; and CLE Credits for OH, PA, and KY are pending!*

This is the not-to-be-missed HR event of the year in West Virginia!

[Register Now!](#)

Governor's Action on Legislative Bills Completed

West Virginia Chamber - Wednesday was the final day for Governor Jim Justice to act on bills that were passed during the 2019 Legislative Session. During this annual process, the Governor has three options: sign a bill into law, veto a bill, or refuse to act and let a bill become law without his signature. On Wednesday the Governor vetoed 27 bills and signed numerous others into law. Below are notable bills that received action:

Notable Bills SIGNED into Law by Governor:

- SB 1 -- "Last Dollar In" Expansion of Community & Technical College Education
- SB 3 -- Broadband Expansion; Wireless Small Cell Deployment
- SB 4 -- Expansion of Municipal Home Rule Program
- SB 119 -- Medical Peer Review Documents Not Subject to Discovery in Litigation
- SB 163 -- DEP Air Quality Rules
- SB 360 -- Restrictions on Third-Party Litigation Financing
- SB 377 -- Minimum Wage & Maximum Hour Standards
- SB 510 -- Certificates of Merit in MPLA Medical Malpractice Litigation
- SB 531 -- Workers' Compensation Claims for Hearing Loss
- SB 543 -- Allowing "As Is" Sale of Older or High-Mileage Motor Vehicles without Warranty
- SB 622 -- Campaign Finance Reform - Updated Contribution Limits
- HB 2001 -- Eliminating Personal Income Taxation on Social Security Benefits
- HB 2004 -- Providing for Program of Workforce Preparedness
- HB 2010 -- Managed Health Care for Children in Foster Care System
- HB 2049 -- Liability of Prime Contractor for Wages & Benefits of Sub-Contractor
- HB 2538 -- Banking Services for Medical Cannabis
- HB 3139 -- Creating PEIA Rainy Day Fund
- HB 3142 -- Reducing Severance Tax on Steam Coal

Notable Bills VETOED by Governor Justice:

SB 487 -- Evidence of Health Care Staffing Levels in Litigation
SB 522 -- Creation of Special Road Repair Fund ("Randy's Dream")
HB 2079 -- Vertical Integration of Medical Cannabis Industry
HB 2661 -- Permitting Natural Gas Utilities to Recover Certain Costs
HB 2673 -- Creating Oil & Gas Abandoned Well Plugging Fund
HB 2734 -- Reduced Water & Sewer Rates for Low-Income Customers
HB 2828 -- Tax Credits for Investments in Qualified Opportunity Zones
HB 3024 -- WV Business Ready Sites Program

Hoppy Kercheval: Woody Thrasher expected to enter Governor's race

WV MetroNews

Woody Thrasher, who Governor Jim Justice forced out as Commerce Secretary last year, is said to be seriously considering running for Governor. Thrasher won't comment on his possible candidacy, but the smart money is on him getting in the race. Thrasher was a life-long Democrat, but he changed his party registration to Republican about a month ago, apparently in anticipation of challenging Justice in the 2020 Primary Election. Justice has already declared his intent to run for a second term. Other Republicans who have filed with the Secretary of State's Office as precandidates are Mike Folk, Rebecca Maret Henderson and Charles Sheedy, Sr. A Thrasher challenge to Justice would represent a significant shift in what was once a relationship of strong mutual respect. Justice heaped effusive praise on Thrasher when he named him Secretary of Commerce in December, 2016. [Continue...](#)

West Virginia News

Wheeling Jesuit making numerous cuts to programs, full-time faculty

WV MetroNews- Around 24 hours after the Wheeling Jesuit University Board of Trustees announced the institution will remain open for the 2019-2020 school year, university officials delivered crushing news Thursday to students, faculty, and staff of major cuts on the horizon. Jessica Wroblewski, the faculty council chair and associate professor of Theology at WJU, told MetroNews Thursday evening that the school will cut all but seven undergraduate programs and let go of 20 of the 50 full-time faculty at the end of the current school year. Included in the faculty cuts were Jesuits. [Continue...](#)

Home rule is becoming a permanent option for West Virginia's cities

WV MetroNews- An official with the West Virginia Municipal League predicts West Virginia will be much better off once the Home Rule Pilot Project becomes a permanent program later this year. Governor Jim Justice has signed into law SB 4 out of the 2019 Regular Legislative Session which establishes the Municipal Home Rule Program. [Continue...](#)

Illinois company to move into former Wheeling Corrugating facility

WV MetroNews- Jupiter Aluminum announced Monday it is expanding to the former Wheeling Corrugating plant in Brooke County. The company will work with the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle to renovate the space. The cost to transform the 140,000 square feet will cost \$3.2 million. The corporation acquired the site in 2012. Jupiter Aluminum, based in Illinois, recycles scrap metal into coils.

Justice signs Social Security tax bill as officials declare victory

WV MetroNews - Starting in the 2020 tax year, most citizens across West Virginia will begin to see an elimination on their social security tax. This is after Governor Jim Justice signed House Bill 2001, which exempts Social Security benefits from personal income taxes in a three-year phase-in, into law on Wednesday. AARP West Virginia President Rich Stonestreet is happy the bill is now law, as he said Thursday this has been a legislative priority for quite some time and the underlying issue was having to pay taxes twice. [Continue...](#)

Governor vetoes ACT choice bill, citing law requiring same test for 4 years

Charleston Gazette-Mail- Gov. Jim Justice says he vetoed Senate Bill 624, which would have let counties use exams other than the SAT as their 11th-grade standardized test, partly because it "directly conflicts" with existing West Virginia law. His written veto message, released Thursday, says: "The comprehensive statewide student assessment adopted prior to the testing window of the 2017-2018 school year shall continue to be used for at least a total of four consecutive years." [Continue...](#)

Governor Justice vetoes 'Randy's Dream'

WV MetroNews- Senator Randy Smith is peeved about Gov. Jim Justice vetoing "Randy's Dream," a bill pushing for more resources and transparency for West Virginia road repair. In a telephone interview while he was pulled off along the highway Wednesday evening, Smith actually used stronger language than peeved. "I'd looked for it to be vetoed because Jim wasn't going to

be one-upped by anybody," said Smith, R-Tucker. The bill was among the most prominent to be vetoed by Justice during a flurry of bill activity on Wednesday, the governor's final day to take action on legislation that passed at the end of the legislative session. [Continue...](#)

Lawsuit alleges church cover-up, sexual abuse by former bishop

Charleston Gazette-Mail- A lawsuit filed in Ohio County this month alleges a Pocahontas County man was sexually abused by a former Catholic bishop in Wheeling and that church officials allowed the bishop to continue "his ministry and sexually deviant behaviors completely unhindered for years." In the lawsuit filed on March 22, former Wheeling-Charleston Diocese bishop Michael Bransfield is described as a person who would "drink until he was intoxicated" and make sexually suggestive gestures and hug, kiss, inappropriately touch and fondle boys and young men studying to become priests. [Continue...](#)

Governor vetoes medical cannabis vertical integration bill, but fix may appear on special session call

WV MetroNews- Gov. Jim Justice vetoed a bill aimed at paving the way for medical cannabis businesses to set up in West Virginia. The bill's lead sponsor is disappointed and sees the veto as a setback for the program set to launch July 1. But a fix may be in the works for the special session set to resume in May. [Continue...](#)

National News

West Virginia lawmakers react to Mueller report

WV MetroNews- Most of West Virginia's congressional delegates expressed satisfaction with special counsel Robert Mueller's report which states there is no evidence showing anyone with President Donald Trump's campaign worked with Russia to affect the 2016 presidential election. The report, which Attorney General William Barr summarized Sunday in a letter to congressional leaders, also stated there is not sufficient enough evidence supporting if Trump obstructed justice. Barr added Mueller did not clear Trump of such action. [Continue...](#)

Oklahoma settles with Purdue Pharma just like WV but for \$260 million more

WV MetroNews- OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma has settled out of court with the state of Oklahoma for \$270 million, removing the drug maker from a lawsuit scheduled to go to trial in May. The settlement, announced Tuesday, is 27 times more than what then-West Virginia

Attorney General Darrell McGraw settled with Purdue Pharma over OxyContin in 2004. The state received \$10 million over a four-year period. McGraw originally filed the lawsuit in 2001 claiming Purdue Pharma had aggressively marketed OxyContin in West Virginia leading to addiction. More than a third of the settlement went to attorney fees. [Continue...](#)

Editorials / Op-Eds

Mark Sadd: How I'm spending my Powerball winnings

Daily Mail WV

I have decided to give away all of my \$800 million Powerball jackpot winnings. Do not be surprised when it is announced that after four months of my unexplained absence, I have returned from hiding in Parkersburg to announce my donation. The reason I will have picked Parkersburg is that no one would ever think to go there to find me. For the record, my charities will not include my acquisition of a James Bond-villain Tahitian volcano island hideaway populated by squadrons of beautiful women with ponytails in black unitards armed with laser guns guarding my personally designed doomsday machine whose sole and diabolical purpose will be to scramble global viewing of the ESPN family of sports channels. I will pay for that out of my own pocket. [Continue...](#)

Paul Calamita: Legislature right to wait on EPA water standards

Daily Mail WV

I have represented local governments in the public water supply business across West Virginia and the country for almost 30 years. My clients spend your money to provide safe and affordable public drinking water. We are not in the business of avoiding necessary and appropriate requirements. Instead, we embrace them and simply charge you more so that we can comply. That said, the West Virginia Legislature was absolutely right to defer adoption of the EPA's 2015 updated human health criteria. Some of those criteria would be significantly lower while limits for other criteria would be significantly increased. My clients objected to their adoption (both higher and lower) because the roller coaster increases and decreases in the criteria resulted primarily from the EPA revising multiple margins of safety on top of already very stringent criteria. That is not good science. [Continue...](#)

Bill Bissett: Getting a much better understanding of WV

The Herald Dispatch

I was fortunate to be able to move back to my home state of West Virginia two years ago to lead the Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce and return to the city where I grew up. Our Chamber represents more than 550 businesses in a two-county area of West Virginia. While our Chamber does many things, such as advocating for our membership and promoting opportunities in our region, this position has given me greater insight related to a question that I have asked myself throughout my career - How do we make West Virginia a better place to live, work and thrive? [Continue...](#)

Leah Curry: Protect federal funding for WV child care

Charleston Gazette-Mail

As the president of a company that employs more than 1,700 people in West Virginia, I know that balancing family and work responsibilities can be challenging. That's one key reason why I lauded Congress' 2018 support of the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which provides funding to improve quality child care options and helps parents afford that care so they can stay in the workforce or engage in education and training. Despite plenty of competing priorities, our lawmakers in Washington demonstrated their awareness of how important this program is by nearly doubling funding for the program in the past two fiscal years. [Continue...](#)

Editorial: It's past time to privatize PEIA

Daily Mail WV

Gov. Jim Justice and the Legislature have designated \$105 million to be placed into a reserve fund to help the Public Employees Insurance Agency get through the 2020-21 plan year without increasing premiums or cutting benefits. The problem is the 2021-22 benefit year. With \$105 million ready to be deposited into a newly created reserve fund, West Virginia's Public Employees Insurance Agency will be able to get through the 2020-21 plan year without needing premium increases or benefits cuts, PEIA Executive Director Ted Cheatham said last week. [Continue...](#)

Upcoming West Virginia Chamber Events

**West Virginia Chamber 2019 Human
Resources Conference**

April 9-10, 2019



[Register Now!](#)



**West Virginia Chamber 2019
Environmental & Energy Conference**

May 15, 2019

West Virginia Chamber of Commerce
1624 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston WV 25301

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